

# Morning Highlights

**June 29, 2007**  
**Morning Highlights 2007-64**

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## **FIRE DANGER**

Many people are aware of the two large, staffed fires burning in the southern portion of the state (Su River and Caribou Hills). What they may not be aware of is that, though there is lack of fire activity in other areas around of the state, certain places have extremely high fire potential. Low humidities, high temperatures and a consistent lack of precipitation has made the Copper River Basin one of these areas. According to local fire personnel, the situation is a concern, especially as additional people will be coming to recreate over the next week to celebrate Fourth of July. Fire officials ask that you use a sense of caution statewide with anything that could start a large, dangerous wildfire. Please ensure that campfires are completely extinguished after use, that fireworks are used carefully (on pavement or gravel) and only where legal, and that burn permit restrictions are adhered to. If wildland fires are started in the Copper River Basin, or other dry areas, they may be incredibly difficult to control because of this summer's weather conditions and persistent lack of moisture in some areas.

## **CARIBOU HILLS FIRE**

Containment lines on the 55,222-acre Caribou Hills Fire held Thursday, and crews continue to extinguish hot spots within 200 feet of the fire perimeter. The fire remains 66-percent contained, as the northeastern side burns uncontained in the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. Within portions of the refuge that are designated wilderness, firefighters must use "MIST" Minimum Impact Suppression Tactics; therefore, the use of mechanized equipment for the construction of fireline is restricted. Steep terrain, bug-killed spruce, and the importance of having safety zones, which are fewer there, make this a hazardous area for firefighting operations. This part of the fire is confined to the refuge and will be closely monitored. Should the fire pass a pre-determined line, suppression measures will be implemented.

Firefighters continue to work on the area of concern south of Deep Creek, which is the closest portion of the fire to Ninilchik. The fireline and a contingency line have been completed, and crews continue to extinguish hot spots within 200 feet of the line. Crews will also work in the northwest part of the fire to complete the line which runs from Oilwell Road northeast to the 2005 Fox Creek Fire. Pockets of unburned vegetation located inside the fire's edge may continue to flare up. Firefighters will monitor the flare ups and suppress any that pose a threat to structures or the line. Residents of the peninsula should expect to see interior smoke as the warm weather and predicted winds cause fire activity to increase. This weather will put the contained portion of the perimeter to test. As fire containment increases, crews will be released to rest and prepare for other incidents.

Travel restrictions will continue on Oilwell Road through the weekend. It will be open daily from 7:00 pm to 7:00 am as suppression work and fire conditions allow. The road will be closed to public access from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm daily to permit fire personnel to

work safely in the area. Everyone is discouraged from driving on Caribou Hills area roads during the day due to the heavy traffic and hazards, including firefighting equipment and falling trees. The Temporary Flight Restriction will also be lifted during the evenings from 10:00 pm until 8:00 am. Caribou Lake is outside the current TFR area, so pilots are free to fly in and out of it at any time. For more information contact: **907-714-2484**; visit <http://inciweb.org> or [www.borough.kenai.ak.us/emergency](http://www.borough.kenai.ak.us/emergency) to find the latest news releases, maps and photos.

## SU RIVER FIRE

One smoke was found yesterday along the east flank and several smoldering hot spots were located by crews on the north flank. Structure protection consisting of hose lays and sprinklers is in place. Crews will mop-up and patrol the fire perimeter throughout the weekend looking for smoldering spots and smoke because of the current warm weather. The fire perimeter has been mopped-up to 500 feet in from the perimeter. The entire perimeter will be patrolled by air and monitored by crews on the ground. Demobilization of some crews will begin today, with the break down of some remote camps being initiated. All remote camps will be rehabilitated after break-down. A cargo transfer helispot established in the vicinity of MP 86 at Resolute Rd will begin receiving backhaul from the camps. Utilizing this location will decrease helicopter flight time, and lessen repetitive trips to Dëshka Landing. The helibase will remain at Dëshka Landing for fueling and actual crew transfer. The TFR remains in place. Aircraft are advised to use caution. For more information, call **907-495-6235** or visit <http://inciweb.org>.

## OTHER

- Pilots are advised to check NOTAMs as Temporary Flight Restrictions are in effect. Fire air operations personnel ask that pilots please respect TFRs and avoid airspace over wildland fires, even if a TFR is not in place, because of safety concerns. For specific information, visit: <http://airspace.nifc.gov/mapping/nifc>.
- Six new fires were reported to the Alaska Interagency Coordination Center (AICC) Thursday:
  - Four smokejumpers were deployed on the Venetie Village Fire which began inside the village's fire break. It was reported at one to two acres and smoldering in black spruce and grass. Citizens were able to get a line built using a tractor, but unable to do adequate mop up due to lack of a good water source. The smokejumpers were able to set up a pump and hose and get water to the site. The fire was declared contained Thursday evening. Demob is planned for today.
  - In the Fairbanks Area, a human-caused structure fire that spread into the surrounding wildlands was contained by State and local firefighters.
  - State and local firefighters responded to and contained two small fires in the Mat-Su area.
  - Two lightning-caused fires were reported that are in monitor status, one in the Tok Area and one in the Upper Yukon Zone.

- So far this year, 300 fires have burned roughly 163,200 acres statewide. Forty-one fires are active statewide and five are staffed. This year 208 fires have been human-caused and 93 have been lightning-caused.
- This is Lightning Safety Week; Alaska has many lightning strikes during the summer. An information sheet has been posted on [fire.ak.blm.gov](http://fire.ak.blm.gov).

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**Additional References on Page 4**

## ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

- Alaska Interagency Coordination Center: <http://fire.ak.blm.gov>
  - Map of Current Fires: <http://fire.ak.blm.gov/predsvcs/maps.php>
  - Situation Report: <http://fire.ak.blm.gov/content/aicc/sitreport/current.pdf>
- National Fire Situation: <http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/sitreprt.pdf>
- Creating Defensible Space: <http://firewise.org/> and <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/forestry/pdfs/02firewise.pdf>
- Department of Transportation (Road Closure Info): (907) 451-2240, <http://511.alaska.gov>
- Division of Forestry, Burn Permit Info: (907) 451-2626, <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/forestry/fire/>
- Department of Environmental Conservation (Smoke Concerns): <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/air/am/smoke.htm>
- National Parks Service: [www.nps.gov/akso/Fire/firehome.htm](http://www.nps.gov/akso/Fire/firehome.htm)
- National Weather Service: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/>
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife: <http://www.fws.gov/fire/>
- USDA Forest Service: <http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/>
- Temporary Flight Restriction Information: <http://airspace.nifc.gov/mapping/nifc>
- Federal Aviation Administration: <http://www.faa.gov>

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